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Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, D C 20554

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

CORRECTED

DA 99-201

January 21, 1999

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION WILL HOLD A SERIES OF PUBLIC HEARINGS ON TELEPHONE SERVICE FOR INDIANS ON RESERVATIONS AND SEEKS COMMENT FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON ALL TESTIMONY AND OTHER EVIDENCE PRESENTED THEREIN: REPLY COMMENT DATE TO BE DESIGNATED, IF NECESSARY, AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE HEARING CYCLE.
(BO DOCKET NO. 99-11)**

COMMENT DATE: January 29, 1999

REPLY DATE: Undetermined

The Federal Communications Commission plans to hold several public hearings entitled: "Overcoming Obstacles to Telephone Service for Indians on Reservations". The first hearing will be held Friday, January 29, 1999 at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center at 2401 12th Street, N.W., Albuquerque, New Mexico, from 8:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

The FCC is responding to concerns that Indians on reservations, in comparison to other Americans, have less access even to basic telephone service. At these hearings, the FCC seeks to learn the reasons for this lack of telephone service and to determine what specific actions the FCC might take to improve access to telephone service on Indian reservations.

As a prelude to these hearings, Commission representatives met with many tribal leaders and other Indian representatives to obtain their insights into the problem of underservice to Indians on reservations. Formal presentations from Indian leaders at the hearings will continue and extend this dialogue. At the hearings, the Commission will also seek input from federal and state officials, tribal officials, and telecommunications services providers on the steps necessary to give all Indians on reservations the opportunity to obtain telephone service at affordable rates. Members of each of these constituencies will make presentations at the hearings. The Commission welcomes written submissions from interested parties. These submissions should be filed in BO Docket No. 99-11.

The Commission requests that the witnesses address issues such as the respective roles of



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tribal, federal, and state authorities in ensuring the availability of telephone services on reservations and in providing financial support for those services. Further, the hearings will examine whether alternative technologies can deliver quality communications services to tribal customers. The Commission will be seeking recommendations for solutions that can overcome obstacles to the delivery of comprehensive services to tribal nations that wish to receive those services.

Some of the key matters that the hearings will explore are:

- * the costs of delivering services to remote areas having very low population densities;
- * the impact of the size and extent of local calling areas on affordability of service;
- * the quality of telephone service on reservations;
- * the complexities of governmental jurisdiction and sovereignty issues; and
- * the effects on telephone service of low incomes and high unemployment on reservations.

Interested parties may file comments on the above-referenced issues, and on all issues and other concerns relevant thereto, on or before March 31, 1999. All comments should reference the DA number and Docket number designated above, and should be filed with the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, Portals Building, 445 12th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20554.

The full text of transcripts of testimony at the hearing, comments thereon, and if later designated for receipt, reply comments, will be available in the immediate future for inspection and duplication during regular business hours at the FCC Reference Center, Room 239, 1919 M Street, N.W., Washington D.C. 20554. It is anticipated that the Reference Center will be relocated to the Commission's Portals Building during the late Spring or early summer of 1999. Accordingly, and especially after March 1, 1999, interested parties are advised to contact the FCC Reference Center to determine its location.

For further information, contact Eric Jensen, at (202)418-0990, or via e-mail ejensen@fcc.gov, at the Office of Communications Business Opportunities, or Bill Kehoe, (202)418-7122, or via e-mail bkehoe@fcc.gov, at the Common Carrier Bureau.

By the Director, Office of Communications Business Opportunities, Federal Communications Commission.

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